

Questions, Questions, Questions

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Immediately after the end of the Second World War in Europe, the US Army established in Oberursel, a small town about 20 kilometers outside Frankfurt-am-Main, a center that has a unique place in the history of US intelligence. Officially it was known as the 7707th European Command Intelligence Center. Unofficially it was referred to as Camp King.

During the war, the camp, known as Dulag Luft (Transit Camp Air) had been used by the Germans as an interrogation center for captured RAF and American Air Force officers. When the US Army took it over, all the necessary physical facilities were therefore available—quarters, stockade, small houses for special prisoners, and interrogation rooms. “Oberursel,” as the camp was most frequently called, became the Army’s center for detailed interrogation.

All the interrogators assigned to the center were graduates of the Military Intelligence Training Center in Camp Ritchie, Maryland, and almost all had served in IPW (interrogation of prisoners of war) teams attached to combat units during the war. The interrogators were able to cope with cases requiring fluency in German, Russian, French, Italian, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Spanish, and Dutch; one had near-fluent Japanese, which he used only when cursing. After many interrogators had been transferred to military government positions in late 1945, a core of about 40 interrogators remained in Oberursel, divided into an intelligence section and a counter-intelligence section.

My own assignment to the center began in September 1945, after three pleasant months of doing nothing in the Provence area of France, most

of the time near the famed Pont du Gard between Nimes and Avignon. At the end of May 1945, my IPW team, which had been attached to the 66th Infantry Division during the war, was transferred abruptly to the Marseille District through a War Department error. As the commanding general of the district made clear to us on arrival, he had not asked for us, did not want us, and, with all kinds of problems arising from 250,000 troops awaiting transfer to the Pacific, asked us to keep out of his hair. We obliged with pleasure, but then came that tragic day in early September when G-2 in the Pentagon discovered our whereabouts and ordered us to Oberursel.

My first assignment was to interrogate a fairly high-ranking Nazi, who, on entering the interrogation room, assured me with great emphasis that he had been, was then, and would remain a convinced Nazi. I found the statement so refreshing that I told the guard to bring in coffee and doughnuts for him. Refreshing because during the last two months or so of the war, almost every German prisoner we interrogated asserted solemnly that he was a member of “the resistance against Hitler.” (At one point this caused the G-2 of the division to exclaim, “If they’re all members of the resistance, who the hell is shooting at us?”)

One of the most famous inmates of the camp from 1945 until the FBI finally picked her up in 1947 to take her to Washington to face treason charges was “Axis Sally” Eilers. An American citizen who had broadcast Nazi propaganda from Berlin to American troops in Europe, she was brought to Oberursel after the war not for interrogation, but to be held for the FBI. She was kept in a small, comfortable house on the post rather than in the stockade. The second commanding officer of the post visited her frequently, and on one occasion he told her that there were two categories of Americans: those who were with the Jews and those who were against the Jews.

He added that he was in the second category. Unknown to him, every room in the house was so well bugged that the sound of a mouse sighing could be picked up clearly. The recording of his statement to Axis Sally was later given to a powerful member of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, whereupon the colonel was forced into retirement.

When she was finally put on trial in Washington in early 1948, I was amused by the journalistic description of her as the “beautiful blonde” Axis Sally. Blonde she was, when her hair was properly dyed, but I can honestly say that I have never seen a woman with a face more like a horse than hers.

Another famous detainee in 1945-46 was Hannah Reitsch, the famous German test pilot who attempted in April 1945 to fly Hitler out of Berlin to the Berchtesgaden area. (He refused to go.) I mention her case only because of an incident in 1946. A US Army colonel in military government suggested that she be given the leading role in reconstructing the secondary school system in the US zone of Germany, pointing out that she had never been a member of the Nazi Party. Our recordings of her conversations with other German detainees showed that, although she had had the foresight to avoid membership in the Nazi Party, she was as convinced and unreconstructed a Nazi as we had ever come across. The recordings sufficed to kill the colonel’s idea. Years later I learned that she was training the air force of Ghana.

Yet another famous detainee was the German adventurer Otto Skorzeny. Tried but acquitted of war crime charges—rightly acquitted, in my opinion—by a US military court at Dachau in 1946, he was then sent to Oberursel until a decision could be made what to do with him. US military intelligence had learned that his brother was being held by the Soviets in their zone of Germany and was to be used to lure Otto into the zone, where the Soviets planned to use him as a rallying point for the youth of the zone. I was assigned the task of questioning him and then recommending disposition.

Skorzeny, endowed with a remarkably strong physique, became famous during the war for two reasons. During the Battle of the Bulge, he put together

and commanded a force of American-speaking German troops in US uniforms to infiltrate American positions. Early in 1945 he devised and executed a plan to rescue Mussolini, who at that time had taken refuge on a mountain in northern Italy. He was not a Nazi, and in fact any ideology was alien to him. He was purely and simply a man of action and a patriotic German.

On arriving in my interrogation room for the first time, he promptly warned me not to try to use any physical violence because he could overpower me in no time. He calmed down when I asked him in reply whether he could move faster than a bullet from a .45 calibre pistol.

After I had explained the facts about his brother and the Soviet plans for him, Otto, he asked for time to think over where he would like to go, and in the third or fourth session with him he told me he would like to go to Spain. G-2 in USFET (US Forces, European Theater) in Frankfurt concurred in my recommendation that he be resettled there. He became a rather successful entrepreneur in Madrid, but for years afterwards—I think I last heard about him in 1961—he approached each succeeding US Air Force attaché in Madrid with an offer to build a network of agents in the USSR for the United States. What surprised me (or did it?) was the fact that each succeeding Air Force attaché recommended to the Pentagon that Skorzeny be taken up on his offer, although there was not the slightest shred of evidence that he had the capability or the know-how to implement his proposal. The Pentagon rejected each of the recommendations from Madrid.

By the winter of 1945-46, the number of former Nazis being sent to Oberursel for interrogation had decreased almost to zero, and from that time on the counterintelligence section of the post was occupied almost exclusively with the interrogation of defectors from the East and of suspected Eastern agents arrested by the Army’s Counterintelligence Corps (CIC). G-2 in the Frankfurt headquarters had ordered that both categories of people be sent to Oberursel for detailed interrogation. The intelligence section of the post concentrated on questioning Germans who, by virtue of their wartime functions, had considerable knowledge of Soviet industries.

Oberursel was also by that time the central point for screening and processing selected German scientists, especially those who had had experience with problems of rockets and space, for employment in the US. This was Operation Paperclip, later heavily criticized in some American circles because many of the scientists brought to the States had Nazi Party backgrounds.

The story of Oberursel would not be complete without recounting the “starvation episode.” In December 1945 some members of Congress charged publicly that the Army was deliberately starving the Germans in the US Zone. At the beginning of January 1946 the commanding officer of the 7707th European Command Intelligence Center was ordered by Army headquarters in Frankfurt to dispatch all his interrogators in teams of two to question Germans in the US Zone at random as to whether they were receiving enough food. For the next two weeks this is what the interrogators of Oberursel did. We could have written our reports without leaving Oberursel, but ours not to reason why. We wrote our combined report on return to Oberursel, it was sent through channels to the Pentagon and thence to Congress, and nobody paid the slightest attention to it. The Army continued to include large amounts of peanut butter in the rations issued to the Germans. But at least I felt better on my return to Oberursel; a dentist I had questioned in Mannheim expertly filled two cavities in my teeth.

As a result of their interrogations of defectors from the Soviet and East European intelligence services, as well as arrested agents of these services, the interrogators in the counterintelligence section of Oberursel became experts on the services, especially the Soviet state security service (MGB at the time, then KGB) and, to a much lesser extent, the Soviet military intelligence service (GRU). However, as we received defectors from the Czechoslovak intelligence service and agents thereof, it struck us that this service, recreated under Soviet control, was rapidly becoming uniquely imaginative and proficient in its foreign operations. In 1959 it was therefore of more than passing interest to me when I learned that MI6, the British foreign service, was sending a team of officers to warn the internal security services of the European NATO countries that

the Czechoslovak service was so effective that at least as much attention should be given to it as was being given to the KGB.

In the spring of 1946 CIC in Salzburg foiled a Soviet attempt to kidnap an Austrian who had served German military intelligence (*Abwehr*) during the war by providing it with information on the Soviet military. The man the Soviets tried to kidnap was Richard Kauder, alias Klatt. He and two of his war-time associates were sent to Oberursel for their protection and for detailed interrogation. The two associates were the White Russian émigré, Gen. Anton Turkul, and another Russian émigré, Ira Longin, alias Lang, alias several other names. I was assigned to interrogate all three of them and ended up spending more time on that case than on any other case in my Oberursel career.

Much of what has been written about Klatt (he was better known by this alias than by his true name) and his wartime network consists of fiction rather than fact. To put the basic fact concisely, his entire so-called network for the *Abwehr* was a Soviet-controlled military deception operation from beginning to end.

SSU (Strategic Services Unit—the successor to the OSS until the CIA was established) in Frankfurt, with which I had close liaison, somehow became fascinated with “the Turkul case.” Turkul was in fact a useless oaf who had lent his name to the Klatt network as the man who allegedly recruited sources in the USSR. He never recruited even one source, although Klatt managed to convince the *Abwehr* that Turkul was one of his principal agents.

Ira Longin was an intelligent liar who could spin off 60 cover stories in as many minutes. Allegedly he had been in Istanbul during most of the war and had communicated his reports on the Soviet military to Klatt in Sofia. How had he communicated them? After having tried to give me X-number of cover stories about his communications system, he was finally reduced to replying, “By telephone.” The truth of the “Klatt network” had to be obtained from Klatt himself.

Klatt arrived in Oberursel accompanied by his Hungarian mistress and was kept in a comfortable, guarded house just outside the confines of the post. It was clear from the first interrogation session of several hours that he was going to resist making any admissions which might reflect adversely on his war-time operation or on his ability to reconstruct an agent network in the Soviet Union. It was equally clear why he had such a will to resist. Having no other means of making a living, he had sold himself and his alleged capability to the small SSU unit in Salzburg and looked forward, after his release from Oberursel, to serving US intelligence as he had served the *Abwehr*.

There were three facets in the interrogation of Klatt: (1) My face-to-face interrogation of him and, to a much lesser extent, of Turkul and Longin. (2) Unknown to and, surprisingly, unsuspected by Klatt, every room in the house where he and his mistress were kept was thoroughly bugged. His comments to her after each interrogation session were frequently more useful than the results of the direct interrogations. (3) My interrogation of former *Abwehr* officers who had dealt with him during the war. The most informative of these was Colonel Wagner, alias Delius, who had headed the *Abwehr* office in Sofia and in 1946 was being held by French intelligence in Bad Wildungen in the French zone of Germany, where I questioned him.

The following picture gradually emerged from these three means of obtaining information. An Austrian citizen resident in Vienna, Klatt learned in 1941 that the Gestapo was after him because he was half Jewish. Through an Austrian friend, Joseph Schultz, he met General Turkul, who was then in Vienna and who told Klatt that he could activate friends in the Soviet Union to report on Soviet military movements. Schultz then arranged a meeting between Klatt and Count Marogna-Redwitz, then head of the *Abwehr* office in Vienna, who was so impressed by Klatt's sales pitch regarding a "network" in the USSR that he obtained approval from *Abwehr* headquarters in Berlin to take Klatt on, at least on a trial basis. Klatt met Longin through Turkul and, without inquiring very deeply, bought Longin's allegation that he already had a network in the Soviet Union and could run it from Istanbul. For all practical purposes, Schultz was Klatt's principal agent.

The initial reports supplied by Klatt to Marogna-Redwitz impressed *Abwehr* headquarters enough to cause the *Abwehr* to intercede with the Gestapo on his behalf and, in early 1942, to move him to Sofia, where he was supplied with an elaborate suite of offices. Theoretically Klatt was under the control of Colonel Wagner, head of the *Abwehr* office in Sofia, but when Wagner began protesting to Berlin that in his opinion Klatt was either a complete fabricator or being used by the Soviets to pass military deception to the *Abwehr*, he was told by Berlin to support Klatt in every possible way. Apparently *Abwehr* headquarters evaluated Klatt's reports highly.

Wagner told me that one wall of Klatt's office was covered with a map of the USSR west of the Urals, with a small light near each major city. Whenever Wagner or another *Abwehr* officer visited Klatt, one or more lights flashed repeatedly, whereupon Klatt would exclaim, for example, "Ah! A report from Kiev has just come in." As Wagner's suspicions mounted and were expressed to Berlin, *Abwehr* headquarters warned him with increasing rigidity not to interfere with Klatt's work in any way. It was made clear to Wagner that Klatt's reports contained information of exceptional military value.

Klatt's description of his office in Sofia confirmed in every detail what Wagner had said, and he spontaneously mentioned Wagner's obvious suspicions of him. However, his behavior pattern and the contents of his responses to detailed questioning about his agents, subagents and communications systems led me by the end of 1946 to believe that (1) he had been totally dependent on Joseph Schultz for the information passed to the *Abwehr*; (2) the entire Klatt operation had been Soviet-controlled; (3) Klatt himself had not been under direct Soviet control but had suspected that his operation was; (4) he had not dared breathe a word of his suspicion to anybody for fear that the *Abwehr* would withdraw its protection of him vis-a-vis the Gestapo; (5) he intended to resist admitting his suspicion to me for fear that this would negate his chances of employment by US intelligence, a prospect held out to him in 1945-46 by SSU in Salzburg.

Early in 1947, MI6, which had a profound interest in determining whether the Klatt operation had been under Soviet control for deception purposes, obtained G-2's permission to send an officer to Oberursel to question Klatt. They had no interest in interrogating Turkul or Longin. The officer they sent was Klop Ustinov (the father of Peter Ustinov, the actor), who had had some experience with the Cheka in Moscow in 1917 and during the Second World War was considered to be one of MI5's top operators against the Germans.

Ustinov and I interrogated Klatt for several hours, during which it was evident that he was resolved not to admit any suspicion of Soviet control of his wartime network. By prearrangement with me Ustinov abruptly dismissed Klatt, who was then taken, also by prearrangement, to a cell in the stockade rather than to the house he had been occupying with his mistress. About an hour later the stockade guard summoned me urgently to inform me that Klatt had hanged himself but had been cut down in time. After the post doctor had examined him thoroughly and found that he was in no physical danger, I began questioning him and found that he no longer had the will to resist.

Klatt admitted that he had suspected as early as 1941 that he was being used by the Soviets through Schultz to pass deception to the *Abwehr* but for his own purpose of self-protection had refrained from questioning Schultz. As long as the *Abwehr* was satisfied, Klatt was happy. He admitted that toward the end of the war, just before fleeing from Vienna to Salzburg to avoid falling into Soviet hands, Schultz had "disappointed" him by telling him that he, Schultz, was a Soviet agent, had been one since 1939, and had conspired with the Soviets to build the "network" for which Klatt was the front man to the *Abwehr*. Turkul and Longin, according to Schultz, had been mere figureheads to help add an air of authenticity to the network, because, as Russian émigrés, they could plausibly have acquaintances in the USSR who could be developed into sources. Schultz, according to Klatt, told him further that neither Turkul nor Longin knew that the entire operation was Soviet controlled. Whatever they might have suspected, they were survivors who had learned years before that survival often depends on keeping one's suspicions to himself.

Klatt related further that in late 1945 he had had an unexpected visit to Salzburg from Schultz, who had proposed that Klatt join him in Vienna to establish an export-import business. Suspecting that Schultz was trying to lure him into Soviet hands, Klatt declined. In any case, by that time he had established contact with SSU in Salzburg and foresaw a rosy future for himself—as a fabricator, but this point was of course not made to the SSU people, who had so neglected to question Klatt in any detail that he was convinced he could outwit them to his own advantage. Space does not permit recounting here all the details provided by Klatt about his wartime activities and methods of survival. Suffice it to say that he was a maneuverer par excellence.

About mid-1947 Klatt, Turkul, and Longin were released. Klatt returned to Salzburg, but that was not the end of my contact with him. In 1952 I bumped into him on a street in Salzburg, whereupon he launched into an attempt to sell me a network that he now "really" had in the Soviet Union. I brushed him off in a few minutes, hoping I would neither see nor hear of him again. Another vain hope! In 1964 a CIA officer in Austria told me that he had established initial contact in Salzburg with a man named Richard Kauder, who appeared to have a network of sources in the USSR. In response to his request for traces from CIA's headquarters files, the officer had been informed that Kauder, alias Klatt, was "suspected" of having fronted for a Soviet-controlled operation against the Germans during the war, but, despite this, information on his current alleged network should be developed without making any commitments. I enlightened the CIA officer, but what SSU, which had received all my interrogation reports on Klatt, had done with them remained another bureaucratic enigma.

As defectors from Soviet intelligence and agents arrested by CIC were sent to Oberursel for interrogation, we were able to form a picture of some activities of the Serov Group. This was the large Soviet state security group (MGB at the time) stationed in East Germany and headed by Col. Gen. Ivan A. Serov, who in 1954 became chief of the KGB for over four years. It emerged from these interrogations that one of the Serov Group's primary objectives, if not *the* primary objective, was the long-range mass

penetration of every sector of life in the western zones of Germany. Thousands of Germans in the Soviet Zone were recruited to resettle in the western zones and aim at careers in politics, science, press, academia, business, banking, trade unions, and police and security services. Most of them signed recruitment statements before leaving for the western zones and were told that they would be contacted at some opportune time after establishing themselves in their respective careers. Very few of them were given any agent training.

Obviously the Soviets did not expect that all these fledgelings would eventually become valuable agents. As one defector told us, the Soviet rule of thumb was “one in ten”: 10 percent of those dispatched to the West might eventually become agents of some value. Considering the fact that this kind of mass penetration was continued by the East German Ministry for State Security after its establishment by the Soviets in February 1950, until the Berlin wall and attendant border controls in August 1961 ended mass refugee movement from East into West Germany, arguments among counterintelligence authorities in the 1960s and 1970s about the number of Soviet/East German agents in West Germany struck me as being exercises in futility. My own view was that there was little security in West Germany, and whether there were 5,000 or 50,000 Soviet/East German agents in West Germany was uninteresting. The scale of arrests of former eastern agents in the former West Germany since reunification in October 1990 attests that West Germany was riddled with agent penetrations.

Another picture that emerged from the Oberursel interrogations concerned the Soviet penetration of émigré groups. From the time of the October Revolution of 1917, organizations of Russians, Ukrainians, and other ethnic nationals who fled abroad were, as potential counterrevolutionary movements, high-priority targets for penetration by Soviet state security organs. It was clear from the information amassed in Oberursel and disseminated to SSU as well as to the Pentagon intelligence agencies that there was scarcely an émigré group that was not penetrated by the Soviets at various levels. This was particularly true of Russian, Ukrainian, and Baltic

groups, with the Russian National Labor Union (NTS), headquartered in Frankfurt, and the Bandera and Melnik factions of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), centered largely in Munich, representing focal points of Soviet penetration activity.

The information obtained on this subject by the Oberursel interrogators simply added to similar information obtained through bitter experiences of the British and French intelligence services in the 1920s and 1930s. The totality of the information was staggeringly convincing. It was astonishing, therefore, that in 1949 the CIA decided, in partnership with the British MI6, to mount “joint” operations with these groups to send agents into the Soviet Union. Given the scale of Soviet penetration of the groups, it could not be expected that such operations would benefit anybody but the KGB, and of course for the next four years or so CIA and MI6 suffered one disaster after another. There was not one successful operation. The mass of information militating against this kind of blindness on the part of those responsible for the decision to operate with émigré groups was simply ignored, resulting in many lost lives of émigré agents, but this did not hinder the careers of the responsible officers. Promotions in the intelligence field, as in some other fields of endeavor, frequently come fastest to those who commit the greatest blunders with maximum noise.

In the summer of 1946 former *Abwehr* Gen. Reinhard Gehlen and his group arrived in Oberursel from Washington. Gehlen, during the war, chief of the Foreign Armies East (*Fremde Heere Ost*) unit of the *Abwehr*, surrendered himself, his aides, and his files to the Americans in the spring of 1945, and the Pentagon leaped at this presumed opportunity to enlist German intelligence experience against the Soviets in the service of the United States. The group, accompanied by three US Army officers, was kept in a large building codenamed Alaska House, just outside the perimeter of the camp itself. About a year later the group was transferred to the Munich area and subsequently became the Federal Intelligence Service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*—BND) of West Germany.

The level of proficiency of the Gehlen group at that time in collecting and evaluating information on the Soviets was indicated by a tipoff I was given in February 1947 by one of the American officers working with the group. At the end of February the Soviets would begin a massive attack against the three western zones of Germany. This and similar false alarms, all evaluated as genuine by Gehlen himself, were perhaps attributable to the presence in the group of Col. Hermann Baun. In Gehlen's Foreign Armies East group, Baun had headed a unit codenamed Walli I, responsible for collecting information on the Soviet military from behind Soviet lines. Baun was a strutting, apparently self-assured officer, regarded by the Americans with the Gehlen group as a showpiece. Over their objections, I obtained permission from G-2 in Frankfurt to interrogate Baun about his wartime operations, almost all of which consisted of sending agents "black," usually by parachute, behind Soviet lines.

It did not take more than a few hours to determine that Baun was alcohol dependent. Interrogating an alcoholic is a cakewalk, provided that the interrogator controls the supply of alcohol. Suffice it to say that after several days of interrogation Baun admitted that not one of his wartime operations had been successful, a complete reversal of his—and Gehlen's—previous assertions to their American controllers. The Soviets had rolled up his agents one after another. My report on the results of the interrogation of Baun aroused nothing less than fury on the part of the US officers responsible for the Gehlen group, especially because it contained Baun's unequivocal statement that during his year or so in Washington he had not been interrogated in detail about his wartime operations. Queries from G-2 in Frankfurt to the Pentagon brought confirmation that this was true. Baun had been accepted as a valuable asset simply on the basis of his wartime position as chief of Walli I.

By the end of 1945 Oberursel was perceived by Germans in the US Zone as *the* US intelligence center in Germany. As a result, during the next two years or so we had a veritable stream of visitors, most of them former SS or Gestapo personnel, who offered their services to US intelligence. Almost every one of them asserted that he had a network of

agents in the Soviet Union and, for the right price, of course, would place his network at our disposal. I doubt that a full week passed without our experiencing one or two of these volunteers, all of whom proved during interrogation to be fabricators. CIC offices in the zone underwent similar experiences, but Camp King was the target of the bulk of the fabricators, not one of whom displayed any great skill in fabrication. The Oberursel interrogators became out of necessity uniquely adept at spotting fabrication with a minimum waste of time.

There were other ways of wasting our time—or having others waste it for us. One of these was the torture charge. In the spring of 1947 a member of Congress alleged that the US Army was torturing detainees in Oberursel. As night follows day, an Inspector General team was dispatched from Washington to Oberursel to investigate the charge. As I had been appointed chief of the counter-intelligence section in February 1947, it was my questionable pleasure to explain to the IG team that the metal contraptions fastened to the walls of the interrogation rooms were space heaters, inherited from the Germans who had previously run the camp, and that they served no other purpose. In answer to questions from the IG officers over several days I explained further that physical violence was not, and never had been, one of our interrogation techniques, nor would it be as long as I had my position. Their unduly long stay in Oberursel was clearly attributable not to their suspicion that we were in fact using physical violence on hostile agents held in the stockade, but to their fascination with some of the cases we were handling. We heard nothing further about the torture charge after their departure.

It may have been this charge that prompted an inspection visit to the post a few weeks later by Major General Walsh, then the senior intelligence officer on the staff of Gen. Lucius D. Clay, the US military governor. After Walsh had questioned every defector and agent then in the post about the quality of the food, the amount of exercise they were receiving, reading material, etc., he then sat down with all the senior interrogators to give us our ultimate, apparently divinely inspired instruction, which I can still quote verbatim: "Your main job is to convert them to religion." I recall with pride that not one of

the interrogators present fainted on hearing this instruction, which confirmed my long-held theory about the basic problem of the world: when man evolved or was created, somebody along the production line neglected to put limits on human stupidity.

These mosquito-bite diversions were more than compensated by the satisfaction in obtaining hardcore information from defectors, of whom one of the most outstanding in my memory was a GRU lieutenant. He was the source in 1947 of the only information available to the US Government on the Red-Bannered Danubian Flotilla, a GRU plan for a widespread commercial cover network of agents in western Europe. Having worked in the GRU control center in Budapest for this operation, the defector was able to provide more than enough information to indicate that this was a model of long-range, meticulous operational planning by the GRU. The reports of the defector's information attracted considerable attention in the Pentagon, SSU, the FBI, and selected internal security services of West European allied countries.

In early February 1948 we received the first signal that Oberursel's days as a center for detailed interrogation were numbered. General Clay issued a decree that Americans working for the Army or military government who had been citizens less than 10 years would have to leave the zone within 90 days. The grapevine had it that this decree was issued on the urging of the American Bishop Muench, then the religious affairs adviser on Clay's staff. Allegedly Muench had a particular aversion to CIC personnel, many of whom had been citizens less than 10 years, having fled Nazi Germany to the US.

When the decree was issued, we had about 20 first-rate, experienced interrogators left in Oberursel, more than half of whom were affected by the decree. Attempts by G-2 in Frankfurt to obtain exceptions for some of these professionals were promptly rejected by Clay's headquarters in Berlin. General Clay having usurped a function of the Supreme Court, there was no allowance for appeals.

Almost simultaneously, in early February 1948 the Legal Division of the military government office in Wiesbaden, responsible for the state of Hesse, began

questioning the practice of holding people for interrogation without affording them the right of habeas corpus as defined in US law. It took several meetings with the chief of the Legal Division and his deputy to explain to them that there were two categories of people under interrogation in Oberursel: defectors, who had voluntarily placed themselves in the hands of US authorities in the zone, and hostile agents known or suspected to be operating against US installations, arrested by CIC and sent to Oberursel in accordance with procedures approved by G-2, US-FET. Further, on completion of the interrogation every agent was either released or transferred to the custody of a US military government court for possible prosecution. Precisely what was to be done to neutralize espionage activity against US interests in the zone if arrest and interrogation were ruled out?

Unable to answer this question, the Legal Division backed off somewhat, at least enough so that G-2 could continue to carry out its assigned mission in this respect. However, from then on arrests by CIC decreased dramatically, partially as a result of pressure from military government and partially because of CIC's loss of experienced operators as Clay's citizenship decree was implemented.

As several interrogators began their preparations for return to the United States in accordance with Clay's decree, the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia took place from 20 to 25 February, resulting in a stream of refugees from that country into the US Zone of Germany. On instructions from G-2 in Frankfurt, CIC screened the refugees, to the extent that screening was feasible, in order to send to Oberursel those who appeared to be particularly knowledgeable. By the end of March we had about 50 refugees, many with their spouses and children, in Alaska House. Among them were such luminaries as Gen. Frantisek Moravec, who had mounted intelligence operations against the Nazis before and, from London, during the war. Deputy Chief of Staff of the Czech Army after the war, he was demoted through Communist machinations to a division commander in 1947. G-2 was interested only in his order of battle information, so he was transferred from Oberursel to Frankfurt for questioning there.

Possibly the most interesting of this group was Vladimir Krajina, one of the top leaders of the Czechoslovak resistance against the German occupiers of his country. For me it was an eye opener to hear his accounts of his successful efforts during the war to avoid capture by the Gestapo, never sleeping twice in the same place. His intention in March 1948 was to return to his country to form a resistance group against the Communists, but this proved to be unfeasible. In 1949 he accepted a position as professor of biology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

During the first few days of dealing with the influx of these refugees, there happened one of those incidents that proved again how small this planet is. While talking with some of the refugees at the bottom of a flight of stairs in Alaska House, I heard somebody call my name. Bounding down the stairs toward me was a giant of a man whom I immediately recognized as a former classmate of mine at college in Boston. He had fled German-occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939 and entered the college on arrival in the US. In early 1941 he decided to return clandestinely to his country to join the resistance. Now here he was in Oberursel, for the second time a refugee from his homeland. It was a great reunion after seven years. I soon found a job for him in a Munich institution that subsequently became Radio Free Europe, in which he was a chief scriptwriter.

By the end of April 1948 almost all the refugees from Czechoslovakia had been interrogated and then evacuated for resettlement in countries of their choice. By this time also, as a result of General Clay's citizenship decree the number of interrogators in the counterintelligence section was down to six and in the intelligence section three. The few new interrogators coming in were exclusively 18- and 19-year-old draftees who had taken a military intelligence course or two at Fort Hollabird, Maryland, and had a long way to go before they would develop any appreciable interrogation competence. CIC's operational capability was sharply diminished by Clay's decree and growing pressure from military government to cease arresting people, with the result that the flow of arrested known or suspected eastern agents to Oberursel had become a tiny trickle.

During the same period, the number of defectors from Eastern intelligence services decreased to a rate of less than one a month. I do not know whether the Soviet blockade of West Berlin, which the Soviets began in early April 1948, was a factor in this change from an average rate of three a month during the previous year.

An additional factor in my deliberations about the future was the establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1947. It was obvious to us that sooner or later the Agency would move to take over responsibility for defectors from the East and establish its own defector reception center in Germany. (In 1949, CIA did in fact plan to establish such a center. Being in the Agency by then, I was offered the chance to become chief of the soon-to-be center, but declined because I was scheduled for an operational assignment to another country.)

There was another discouragingly portentous development in the spring of 1948. G-2 in the Pentagon began issuing to their field units instructions that reflected a growing bureaucratic rigidity. Most of these instructions did not affect Oberursel, but one that did concerned the format for interrogation reports. The sample format we received allowed for no deviation; it was to be followed without exception. It especially caught our attention that the new format allotted exactly two lines for a description of motivation (e.g., of defectors). We had previously used from one to several single-spaced pages to describe the motivation of defectors, which in many cases is a complex subject and is always fundamental in determining whether a defector is bona fide.

If there was any doubt in my mind as to whether the time had come for me to quit military intelligence and switch to CIA, the Pentagon allotment of two lines to a description of motivation removed that doubt.

My last interrogation task in Oberursel concerned an East German who asserted that he had attended a special course at a "Soviet command and general staff school" in the Soviet zone and knew the plans for a Soviet attack against the three western zones in

the summer of 1948. When I asked him to sketch the planned Soviet lines of attack in an outline map of Europe, he had tank divisions going over the Alps—of Switzerland.

He was unable to answer detailed questions about the alleged Soviet school he had attended. In their totality the results of the interrogation showed conclusively that he was a fabricator. A few months after I had left Oberursel, I learned in Washington that somebody in G-2 in the Pentagon had decided not to accept my evaluation of the German. A team of three officers was dispatched to Germany to reinterrogate him and after several weeks came to the same conclusion as I had.

I left Oberursel for the United States at the end of June 1948. Toward the end of that year I learned from a former Oberursel colleague who had just returned that within a few weeks after my departure three other experienced interrogators had left. By the end of 1948 there were only two persons in Oberursel who could be considered experienced, competent interrogators. The post gradually became a center for the debriefing of selected refugees from East Germany. (I have always regarded the word “debriefing” in a counterintelligence context as connoting an interrogation conducted by a lazy person.)

Was anything lost by the deterioration and ultimate collapse of Oberursel as an interrogation center? I will answer this question by citing Klop Ustinov, the British intelligence officer who visited Oberursel in 1947 to question Richard Kauder, alias Klatt. In 1952 the CIA officer who had been chief of the SSU unit in London in 1947 told me that, on returning to London, Ustinov had commented to him that the

Western world had never before had such a concentrated and professional intelligence and counterintelligence interrogation capability as he had seen in Oberursel. Ustinov predicted that through the normal process of bureaucracy and without any conscious attempt by Washington to destroy this unique capability it would wither away and could not be replaced.

In August 1985 KGB officer Vitaliy Yurchenko defected to the United States. While under interrogation (or was it “debriefing?”) in Washington, he decided to return to the Soviet Union. The case became something of a scandal in the US intelligence community, revolving around the fundamental question as to whether he had originally been a genuine defector or had been sent to the US by the KGB for deception and confusion purposes. Being retired, I had no access to any of CIA’s information on the case, but I read every press account I could lay my hands on. According to one account, which rang true, John McMahon, then Deputy Director of the Agency, assured a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that from then on only one interrogator, rather than several, would be given the total responsibility for a defector. The interrogators of the 7707th European Command Intelligence Center had learned and were applying that principle by the end of 1945.